



Mammoth Mill Fact Sheet

Mammoth Mill, Inyo National Forest, Mono County, CA

Background

The U.S. Forest Service has completed a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection (PA/SI) at the Mammoth Mill Site to evaluate whether historic mining activity impacted the surrounding environment. The Mammoth Mill Site is an 1870s-era former gold processing facility located in the town of Mammoth Lakes, within the Inyo National Forest, in Mono County, California. The site includes remnants of the Mammoth Mining Company's stamp mill (including a large iron flywheel), five mill waste piles, recreational cabins and sheds, and a dry diversion trench that connects to an upstream tributary to Mammoth Creek.

The Forest Service initiated the PA/SI under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) in response to the results of initial investigations (2012–2014), which indicated metals were present in site soil at elevated concentrations.

This fact sheet is being distributed to the public to summarize the results of the PA/SI and inform the public on the planned actions, next steps, and ways to get involved in the process.

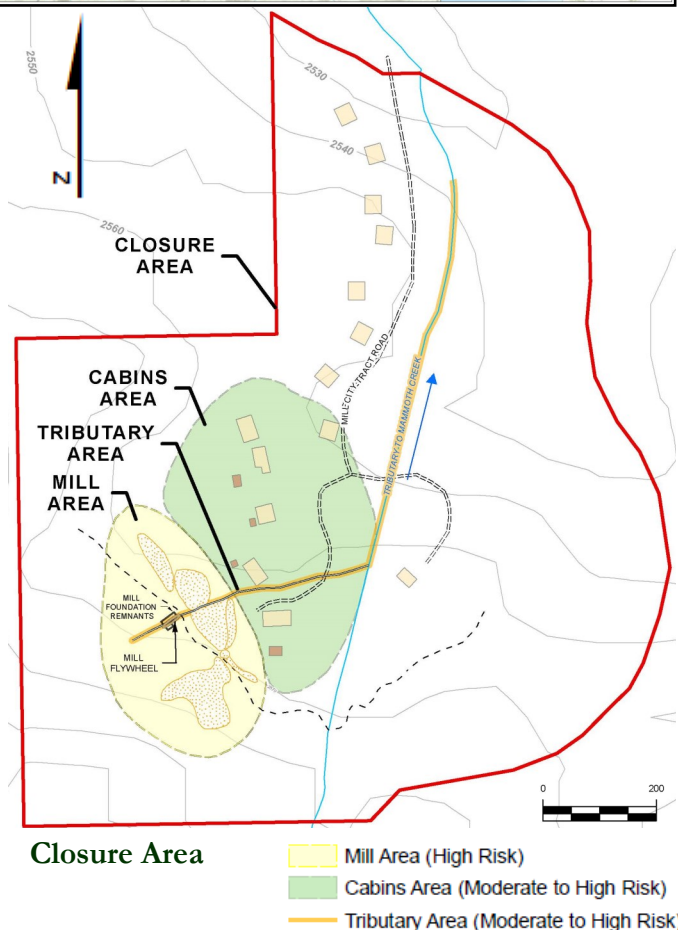
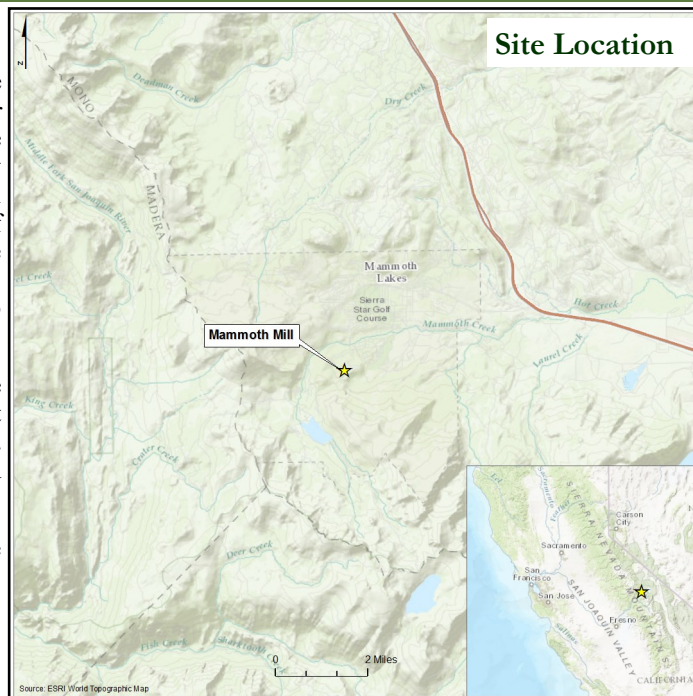
PA/SI and Risk Assessment

During the PA/SI, samples of soil, waste rock, sediment, and surface water were collected and analyzed for metals. The sample results were used to evaluate if metals at the site posed a risk to human health and the environment. Antimony, arsenic, lead, and mercury were identified as the primary chemicals of concern.

All site metals were then evaluated to identify the risk of developing cancer or other negative health effects over one's lifetime. The evaluation also considered the different ways humans might use the site, such as recreational cabin use, day use by hikers/sightseers, and recreational use by visitors. A risk level of high, moderate, or low was assigned for each type of use in three portions of the site: the Mill Area, Cabins Area, and Tributary Area.

The risk evaluation concluded that mine waste impacted soils pose a moderate to high risk to Mill City residents and visitors accessing the site. As a result of the potential risk to human health, the Inyo National Forest has implemented a Forest Order prohibiting access to the site as shown on the figure to the right. The closure encompasses a larger area than was identified in the PA/SI since the lateral extent of the impacted soils has not been fully identified. The closure will remain in place until the removal action is complete. Metals were also found to pose a risk to wildlife and pets at the site; specifically from antimony, arsenic, barium, cadmium, cobalt, copper, lead, mercury, selenium, silver, and zinc.

Based on the PA/SI results, further action is necessary to address risks from exposure to metals at the site. The Forest Service will implement a Time-Critical Removal Action (TCRA) under CERCLA to address the threats posed to human health. The TCRA will involve removal and disposal of all metals-impacted waste and soil that may pose human health risk at the site.





**Sampling at Mill
and in Cabins
Areas**



CERCLA Time-Critical Removal and Next Steps

The TCRA process includes development of appropriate documentation and community outreach while cleanup activities are underway. The next step is to initiate cleanup activities, including removal of the metals-impacted waste material and soil. The cleanup actions to be taken will be documented in an Action Memorandum, the decision document for the cleanup approach.

A public meeting will be scheduled for May 15 at the Mammoth Ranger Station Auditorium. The public meeting will present more detailed information on the upcoming removal action and provide a question and answer period for the public. Additional public meetings may be scheduled, if deemed necessary, as the removal action progresses.

The removal action is anticipated to begin as soon as the snow melts sufficiently to allow access by heavy equipment (estimated to be mid-June 2017). The removal action is anticipated to last 3 to 4 months.

Attend Public Meetings

The Forest Service invites you to review the current PA/SI Report and associated Technical Memorandum for Risk Assessment Refinement and to attend the public meeting.

Please contact Tamara Scholten to be added to the mailing list for this project and learn more about ways you can participate.



Historic Mill Flywheel

Project Contact

If you have any questions or concerns about the site, please contact:

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A copy of the PA/SI Report can be obtained at the following website:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd521873.pdf

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